



SAFESPORT PROGRAM HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

USA Water Ski & Wake Sports (USA-WSWS) strives to provide a safe environment for its members and is committed to create an atmosphere that is free of harassment and abusive practices. ***USA-WSWS and its affiliated Sport Disciplines will not tolerate any form of harassment, abuse or misconduct and will uphold a zero tolerance policy.***

There are many positive reasons to participate in one of USA-WSWS's nine Sport Disciplines, but like all sports, it can also be a high-risk environment for misconduct: emotional, physical, sexual, bullying, harassment and hazing. *All forms of harassment, abuse and misconduct are unacceptable and in direct conflict with USA-WSWS values and ideals.*

Misconduct may damage an athlete's psychological well-being. Athletes who have been mistreated experience social embarrassment, emotional turmoil, psychological scars, and loss of self-esteem. Misconduct may also have a negative impact on family, friends and the sport. Misconduct often hurts an athlete's competitive performance and may cause him or her to drop out of sport entirely.

This SafeSport Handbook, originally created by the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC), and adapted by USA-WSWS, includes various policies that apply to all USA-WSWS members, clubs, programs, events and activities. It acts as an educational tool for USA-WSWS members. This handbook focuses on the following:

- Recognizing and reducing circumstances for potential abuse to occur
- Information on USA-WSWS's required screening and background check program
- The availability and procedures for any person to report suspected abuse or misconduct (including protections from any retaliation or repercussions for such reporting),
- The procedures and means by which USA-WSWS and its sport disciplines, member clubs and programs should respond to allegations of abuse and misconduct

Through the USA-WSWS SafeSport Program, USA-WSWS is committed to providing the safest possible environment for all participants.



SAFESPORT: WHERE YOUR GAME PLAN STARTS

What is SafeSport?

SafeSport is the United States Olympic Community and its 47 National Governing Bodies' initiative to recognize, reduce and respond to misconduct in sport. The six primary types of misconduct identified by the USOC are:

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Hazing
- Emotional Misconduct
- Physical Misconduct, and
- Sexual Misconduct, including Child Sexual Abuse

The Center for SafeSport was launched in February, 2017, and is a consolidated effort to address all Safe Sport issues and provide appropriate education and certification for NGB leadership and members.

Why SafeSport?

Sport provides athletes with an opportunity to perform – on *and* off the field. Unfortunately, sport can also be a high-risk environment for misconduct and abuse. For example, studies indicate that as many as 1 in 8 athletes will be sexually abused within their sport. Misconduct is a critical issue in all sport, and one which we all need a game plan to prevent.

Who is affected by SafeSport?

We all play a role in reducing misconduct and abuse in sport. SafeSport provides resources for all members of the sport community – organizations, coaches, parents and athletes – to identify misconduct, implement ways to reduce it and enact plans to respond to it.

What tools are available from SafeSport?

The SafeSport tools include written materials to help the community prevent misconduct in sport. This USA-WSWS SafeSport Handbook provides a starting place for all member clubs and programs to gain information and awareness about abuse and misconduct in sport.

The Center for SafeSport also provides a SafeSport platform through a free video-based awareness and certification courses for any USA-WSWS member or affiliate. These training videos address the six types of misconduct and provide an in-depth look at how to recognize, reduce and respond to child sexual abuse.

The Center provides for SafeSport education and certification that is applicable for all NGB members.

USA-WSWS has prepared a basic brochure on SafeSport that is available on the USA-WSWS website:

<http://www.usawaterski.org/graphics/downloads/USAWSSafeSportBrochure.pdf>.

As a sport community, we have an opportunity to be part of the SafeSport solution. Start now by visiting www.safesport.org

LETTER FROM SCOTT BLACKMUN



UNITED STATES
OLYMPIC COMMITTEE
1 Olympic Plaza
Colorado Springs, CO
80909

To all USA-WSWS Member Club and Programs,

As a leader in youth sport, you have a role to play in creating and maintaining a safe sport environment. Sport provides many important lessons, including the value of hard work and fair play, the experience of dedicating yourself to a goal and the joy of competing, to name just a few. As we all know, the impact of sport extends far beyond the field of play and can help prepare kids to be successful in any field they choose.

The United States Olympic Committee is proud to dedicate its energy and resources to promoting safe training environments. However, no one individual or club is responsible for addressing issues of misconduct in sport. It's a team effort, and that team consists of sport clubs, coaches, parents and athletes. This responsibility requires constant vigilance; misconduct in sport threatens athletes and clubs as well as the fundamental value that sport contributes to our society.

In order to help you be successful in this critical area of responsibility, the USOC has developed a SafeSport program to provide information and resources so that all members of the sport community have the awareness, tools and support structure they need to recognize, reduce and respond to misconduct in sport. Please visit www.safesport.org to learn more about the proactive steps you can take to ensure that sport continues to deliver on its promise to athletes and the communities that nurture them.

I thank you for your support of this initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S.A. Blackmun". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Scott A. Blackmun
Chief Executive Officer

DEFINITIONS

<i>Child, children, minor and youth</i>	Anyone under the age of 18. Here, “child,” “children,” “minor” and “youth” are used interchangeably.
<i>Members in position of influence and authority</i>	Anyone that USA-WSWS identifies as someone in a position of influence or authority over other USA-WSWS members including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All USA-WSWS certified Coaches and Instructors • All assigned team staff of National and International Teams including: Team leaders, coaches, managers, medical staff • All NSSA Show Directors and Assistant Directors • All Junior Development coaches and leadership • USA-WSWS employees/staff • Persons in leadership positions in USA-WSWS or in any of its 9 sport disciplines
<i>Child physical abuse</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-accidental trauma or physical injury caused by contact behaviors, such as punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning or otherwise harming a child. • Legal definitions vary by state. To find guidelines concerning your state, visit the Child Welfare Information Gateway (www.childwelfare.gov).
<i>Child sexual abuse</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child sexual abuse involves any sexual activity with a child where consent is not or cannot be given. This includes sexual contact with a minor that is accomplished by deception, manipulation, force or threat of force regardless of whether there is deception or the child understands the sexual nature of the activity. Sexual contact between minors can also be abusive if there is a significant imbalance of power or disparity in age, development or size, such that one child is the aggressor. The sexually abusive acts may include sexual penetration, sexual touching or non-contact sexual acts such as verbal acts, sexually suggestive written or electronic communications, exposure or voyeurism. • Legal definitions vary by state. To find guidelines concerning your state, visit the Child Welfare Information Gateway (www.childwelfare.gov).
<i>Misconduct</i>	Conduct which results in harm, the potential for harm or the imminent threat of harm. Age is irrelevant to misconduct. There are six primary types of misconduct in sport: emotional, physical misconduct, sexual misconduct, bullying, harassment and hazing.
<i>Participants</i>	Participants may include athletes, officials, or any other USA-WSWS member or affiliate.
<i>Participant Safety Handbook</i>	As used here, a set of guidelines collecting policies and practices related to an organization’s strategy for recognizing, reducing and responding to child sexual abuse and other misconduct in sport.
<i>USOC</i>	United States Olympic Committee
<i>USA-WSWS</i>	USA Water Ski & Wake Sports: The National Governing body of water ski and towed water sports in the United States

COMPONENTS OF SAFESPORT

USA-WSWS's SafeSport Program involves 5 primary components as indicated in the diagram below:



This document is an educational tool which may be useful to all USA-WSWS member clubs and programs in developing their own policies. The Handbook should not be viewed as creating a legal standard of care or as a model of best practice.

USA-WSWS views its member clubs, schools, camps and programs as independent businesses, which do, and should, have their own business practices, policies and procedures.

SECTION I: POLICIES & GUIDELINES

USA-WSWS is committed to providing a safe and positive environment for its participants' physical, emotional and social development. USA-WSWS promotes an environment free from abuse and misconduct. USA-WSWS is in full support of the USOC SafeSport initiative that is being implemented by all 47 United States National Governing Bodies (NGB). Each NGB is embracing the principles of the SafeSport Initiative and adapting the program to meet the needs of its specific NGB. As part of this program, USA-WSWS has implemented policies to address certain types of abuse and misconduct, and to recognize and reduce areas where potential abuse and misconduct could occur.

All USA-WSWS members appointed to a position of influence and authority will complete a criminal background screening and shall be SafeSport educated and certified through the Center for SafeSport. All USA-WSWS members should familiarize themselves with each form of abuse and misconduct and shall refrain from engaging in such misconduct and/or violating any of these policies.

In the event that any USA-WSWS member or affiliate observes inappropriate behaviors (i.e., policy violations), suspected physical or sexual abuse, or any other type of abuse or misconduct, it is the personal responsibility of each such person to immediately report his or her observations to the appropriate person as described in Section IV: Reporting Abuse and Misconduct.

This section first addresses the general policies related to USA-WSWS's Ethics Policies. Following the general policies are the specific policies addressing the six types of abuse and misconduct identified by the USOC's SafeSport Committee. USA-WSWS has adopted the USOC SafeSport Committee's suggested definitions and descriptions of the six types of abuse and misconduct as outlined below:

- Sexual Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Bullying, Threats and Harassment
- Hazing
- Willfully Tolerating Misconduct

GENERAL POLICIES OF USA WATER SKI & WAKE SPORTS

The following policy can be found in *USA-WSWS's Code of Ethics*:

7: Human Rights

USA-WSWS respects the dignity, rights and aspirations of each employee and volunteer. USA-WSWS embraces the principles of federal, state and local human rights legislation that prohibits discrimination and harassment based on any of the following ground: race, sexual orientation, civil status, veteran status, marital status, religion, age, language, social condition or physical or mental disability. Therefore, USA-WSWS is committed to provide an environment free from discrimination and harassment.

Every volunteer and employee has a responsibility for maintaining and promoting acceptable standards of behavior in order to ensure that all have the opportunity to conduct business and compete in an environment free from discrimination and harassment.

USA-WSWS supports the principles of the *USOC Coaching Ethics Code* and has adopted the following policies that are consistent with the expectations of the USOC:

Instructors and members in positions of influence and authority respect the fundamental rights, dignity, and worth of all participants regardless of cultural, individual, and role differences, including those due to age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status. They do not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices, but instead contribute to the welfare of those with whom they interact professionally. When conflicts occur, members attempt to resolve these conflicts and do so in a responsible fashion that avoids or minimizes harm. Finally, members in position of influence and authority are sensitive to differences in power between themselves and others, and they do not exploit or mislead other people during or after professional relationships.

USA-WSWS supports and adopts the USOC's NGB Athlete Safety Policy. The policy shall apply at least to (1) NGB employees; (2) athletes the NGB designates for the USADA required testing pool (RTP); (3) individuals the NGB formally authorizes, approves or appoints to a position of influence or authority over other USA-WSWS members and athletes.

As part of this policy, USA-WSWS requires criminal background checks, at least every two years, for those individuals the NGB formally authorizes, approves or appoints to a position of influence or authority over other USA-WSWS members and athletes.

As a further part of this policy, USA-WSWS requires education and training concerning the key elements of the NGB athlete safety program for (1) those individuals it formally authorizes, approves or appoints to a position of influence or authority over other USA-WSWS members and athletes; and (2) NGB staff.

It is a violation of USA-WSWS's SafeSport policy if a USA-WSWS member in such a position of influence and authority knows or should know of the abuse and misconduct but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the targeted participant(s).

SEXUAL ABUSE AND MISCONDUCT:

How to Recognize, Reduce and Respond to sexual abuse & misconduct

Participating in one of USA-WSWS's nine disciplines gives new opportunities to USA-WSWS members that enhance their quality of life. The benefits of participating are dependent upon maintaining the bonds of trust, mentorship and mutual respect among members. These elements are undermined when sexual misconduct occurs in any sport setting. Sexual misconduct includes sexual abuse, sexual harassment and rape. Every member of the sport community, especially adults in positions of influence and authority, can contribute to a sport environment free from sexual misconduct by working together and creating awareness of sexual abuse and misconduct.

USA-WSWS's SafeSport Policy

It is the policy of USA-WSWS that there shall be no sexual abuse or misconduct of any minor (or adult) involved in any of its member clubs, schools, camps, events and programs by instructors, coaches, officials, or any other member or affiliate of USA-WSWS.

USA-WSWS supports the principles of the *USOC Coaching Ethics Code* and has created the following policies that are consistent with the expectations of the USOC:

USA-WSWS members and affiliates do not engage in sexual harassment, which includes, and is not limited to, nonconsensual sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature. Inappropriate touching between USA-WSWS members or non-members is prohibited, which includes, but not limited to, nonconsensual touching, hugging, kissing, sexually oriented behavior, sexually stimulating or otherwise inappropriate games.

Any USA-WSWS member who engages in any act of sexual abuse or misconduct is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including, but not limited to, suspension, revocation of membership without refund, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities.

Definition of Sexual Abuse and Misconduct

USA-WSWS supports the following definition of sexual abuse and misconduct provided by the USOC’s SafeSport Committee:

Definition:

Sexual misconduct involves any touching or non-touching sexual interaction that is nonconsensual or forced, coerced or manipulated, or perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitative or threatening manner. It also includes any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual with evaluative, direct or indirect authority. Lastly, any act or conduct described as sexual abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, rape) qualifies as sexual misconduct.

Note:

- ❖ An imbalance of power is always assumed between a coach and an athlete, regardless of age.
- ❖ Minors cannot consent to sexual activity with an adult. All sexual interaction between an adult and a minor is strictly prohibited.

Examples of Sexual Abuse and Misconduct

<i>Touching Offenses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fondling an athlete’s breasts or buttocks • Exchange of reward in sport (e.g., team placement, scores, feedback, free lessons/water time, etc.) for sexual acts • Genital contact – whether or not either party is clothed • Sexual relations or intimacies between participants in a position of trust, authority and/or evaluative and supervisory control over athletes or other sport participants
<i>Non-touching Offenses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexually-oriented comments, jokes or innuendo made to or about an athlete, or other sexually harassing behavior • An authority figure discussing his or her sex life with an athlete • An authority figure asking an athlete about his or her sex life • An authority figure requesting or sending a nude or partial-dress photo to athlete • Exposing athletes to pornographic material • Sending athletes sexually-explicit or suggestive electronic or written messages or photos (e.g., “sexting”) • Deliberately exposing an athlete to sexual acts • Deliberately exposing an athlete to nudity (except in situations where locker rooms and changing areas are shared) • Sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature

PHYSICAL ABUSE AND MISCONDUCT:

How to Recognize, Reduce and Respond to Physical Abuse and Misconduct

Almost all sport involves strenuous physical activity; in practices and competition, athletes regularly push themselves to the point of exhaustion. However, any activity that physically harms an athlete - such as direct contact with instructors or other members in positions of influence and authority, disciplinary actions, or punishment - is unacceptable. Physical misconduct can extend to seemingly unrelated areas including inadequate recovery times for injuries and diet. Two of the best ways to promote safe conditions are to set clear boundaries and to take a team approach to monitoring athletes and participants.

USA-WSWS's SafeSport Policy

It is the policy of USA-WSWS that there shall be no physical abuse or misconduct of any minor (or adult) involved in any of its member clubs, schools, camps, events and programs by instructors, coaches, officials, or any other member or affiliate of USA-WSWS.

Physical contact in sport is inherent in instruction and training. Appropriate physical contact has three elements:

1. The physical contact takes place in public;
2. There is no potential for, or actual, physical or sexual intimacies during the physical contact;
3. The physical contact is for the benefit of the athlete, not to meet an emotional, physical or other need of an adult.

With these elements in place, physical contact with athletes for the safety and instruction, celebration or consolation may be appropriate. In particular, instructors and other members in positions of influence and authority improve skills and make the training environment safer through appropriate physical contact.

Any USA-WSWS member who engages in any act of physical abuse or misconduct is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including, but not limited to, suspension, revocation of membership without refund, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities.

Definition of Physical Abuse and Misconduct

USA-WSWS supports the following definition of physical abuse and misconduct provided by the USOC's SafeSport Committee:

Physical abuse means:

- Physical contact with a participant that intentionally causes, or has the potential to cause, the participant to sustain bodily harm or personal injury.
- Physical contact with a participant that intentionally creates a threat of immediate bodily harm or personal injury. Physical abuse may also include intentionally hitting or threatening to hit an athlete with objects or sports equipment.
- Providing of alcohol to a participant under the age of 21 and the providing of illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any participant.
- Any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., child abuse, child neglect and assault).

Physical misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athlete performance.

Without limiting the above, any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under applicable federal or state law constitutes physical abuse under this policy.

Examples of Physical Abuse and Misconduct

<i>Contact Offenses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punching, beating, biting, striking, choking or slapping an athlete • Intentionally hitting an athlete with objects or sporting equipment • Providing alcohol to an athlete under the legal drinking age (under U.S. law) • Providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any athlete • Encouraging or permitting an athlete to return to play prematurely or without the clearance of a medical professional, after a serious injury (e.g., a concussion) • Prescribed dieting or other weight-control methods (e.g., public weigh-ins, caliper tests for humiliation purposes)
<i>Non-contact Offenses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolating an athlete in a confined space (e.g., locking an athlete in a small space) • Forcing an athlete to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose (e.g. requiring an athlete to kneel on a harmful surface) • Withholding, recommending against or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep.

Emotional Abuse and Misconduct:

How to Recognize, Reduce and Respond to Emotional Abuse and Misconduct

USA-WSWS's SafeSport Policy

It is the policy of USA-WSWS that there shall be no emotional abuse or misconduct of any minor (or adult) involved in any of its member clubs, schools, camps, events and programs by instructors, coaches, officials, or any other member or affiliate of USA-WSWS.

Any USA-WSWS member who engages in any act of emotional abuse is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including, but not limited to, suspension, permanent suspension, and referral to law enforcement authorities.

Definition of Emotional Abuse and Misconduct

USA-WSWS supports the following definition of emotional abuse and misconduct provided by the USOC's SafeSport Committee:

- Emotional abuse involves a pattern of deliberate, non-contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to a participant. These behaviors may include verbal acts, physical acts or acts that deny attention or support.
- Emotional abuse does not include generally accepted and age-appropriate coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, motivation, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athletic performance.

Examples of Emotional Abuse and Misconduct

<i>Verbal Acts</i>	A pattern of verbal behaviors that attack a participant personally (e.g., calling them worthless, fat or disgusting) or repeatedly and excessively yelling at a particular participant or participants in a manner that serves no productive training or motivational purpose.
<i>Physical Acts</i>	A pattern of physically aggressive behaviors, such as throwing sport equipment, water bottles or chairs at, or in the presence of, participants; or punching walls, windows or other objects.
<i>Acts that Deny Attention & Support</i>	A pattern of ignoring a participant for extended periods of time or routinely or arbitrarily excluding a participant from practice.

Note: Bullying, threats, harassment, and hazing (defined in the following sections) often involve some form of emotional misconduct.

BULLYING, THREATS AND HARASSMENT:

How to Recognize, Reduce and Respond to Bullying, Threats and Harassment

USA-WSWS supports an environment that is free from threats, harassment and any type of bullying behavior. The purpose of this policy is to promote consistency of approach and to help create a climate in which all types of bullying, harassing or threatening behavior are regarded as unacceptable.

USA-WSWS's SafeSport Policy

It is the policy of USA-WSWS that there shall be no bullying, threats and harassment of any minor (or adult) involved in any of its member clubs, schools, camps, events and programs by instructors, coaches, officials, or any other member or affiliate of USA-WSWS.

Any USA-WSWS member who engages in any act of bullying, threats and harassment is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including, but not limited to, suspension, permanent suspension, and referral to law enforcement authorities.

Definition of Bullying, Threats, Harassment

USA-WSWS supports the following definitions of bullying, threats and harassment provided by the USOC's SafeSport Committee:

Definition of Bullying:

Bullying is the use of coercion to obtain control over another person or to be habitually cruel to another person. Bullying involves an intentional, persistent or repeated pattern of committing or willfully tolerating physical and non-physical behaviors that are intended to cause fear, humiliation, or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish, or isolate another person. Bullying can occur through written, verbal or electronically transmitted expression or by means of a physical act or gesture. Bullying behavior is prohibited in any manner in connection with all USA-WSWS sanctioned activities and events.

Examples of Bullying

Physical Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Punching, kicking or choking an athlete
Verbal and Emotional Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cyber bullying – Using electronic communication to harass, frighten, degrade, intimidate or humiliate• Using words to harass, frighten, degrade, intimidate or humiliate

Definition of Threats:

A threat to harm others is defined as any written, verbal, physical or electronically transmitted expression of intent to physically injure or harm someone. A threat may be communicated directly to the intended victim or communicated to a third party. Threatening behavior is prohibited in any manner in connection with all USA-WSWS sanctioned activities and events.

Examples of Threats

Direct Threat	• Communicating an intent to cause physical harm to another
Indirect Threat	• Communicating an intent to cause harm through a third party

Definition of Harassment:

Harassment is defined in various sources such as case law, state legislation, sports organization and professional association codes of conduct and training manuals, corporation and workplace documents, and Human Rights Commission materials. USA-WSWS has not adopted any specific definition of harassment, choosing instead to defer to such general sources and definitions for reference and application, depending upon the circumstances. The following, however, presents a general overview.

Behavior: Harassment in sport includes any pattern of physical and/or non-physical behaviors that (a) are intended to cause fear, humiliation, or annoyance, (b) offend or degrade, (c) create a hostile environment, or (d) reflect discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority, or power over an individual participant or group based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, or mental or physical disability.

Environment: Creation of an environment through behavior or course of conduct that is insulting, intimidating, humiliating, demeaning or offensive. Harassment usually occurs when one person engages in abusive behavior or asserts unwarranted power or authority over another, whether intended or not. It includes, for example, name-calling, taunts, threats, belittling, unwelcome advances and requests for sexual acts, as well as undue threats to perform or succeed. Harassment includes child abuse.

Sexual Harassment is a form of harassment prohibited by this policy. It shall be a violation for any member, coach, official, director, employee, parent or volunteer, to harass a participant(s) through conduct or communications of a sexual nature. Additionally, it shall be a violation to retaliate against anyone that reports sexual harassment or participates in a harassment investigation.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual acts, or other verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature may constitute sexual harassment, even if the harasser and the participant being harassed are the same sex and whether or not the participant resists or submits to the harasser, when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a participant's participation in any activity; or
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a participant is used as the basis for decisions affecting the participant; or
3. Such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive such that it limits a participant's ability to participate in or benefit from a program or activity or it creates a hostile or abusive environment.

Any conduct of a sexual nature directed by a minor toward an adult or by an adult to a minor is presumed to be unwelcome and shall constitute sexual harassment. Acts of verbal or physical aggression, intimidation or hostility based on sex, but not involving conduct of a sexual nature may also constitute sexual harassment. Legitimate non-sexual touching or other non-sexual conduct is not sexual harassment.

Examples of Harassment

Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassing environment created by: name-calling, taunts, threats, belittling, unwelcome advances and requests for sexual acts, as well as undue threats to perform or succeed.
Sexual Harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwanted deliberate touching • Unwanted sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions • Unwanted letters, telephone calls, or materials of a sexual nature

HAZING:

How to Recognize, Reduce and Respond to Hazing

USA-WSWS's SafeSport Policy

It is the policy of USA-WSWS that there shall be no hazing of any minor (or adult) involved in any of its member clubs, schools, camps, events and programs by instructors, coaches, officials, or any other member or affiliate of USA-WSWS.

Any USA-WSWS member who engages in any act of emotional abuse is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including, but not limited to, suspension, permanent suspension, and referral to law enforcement authorities.

Definition of Hazing

USA-WSWS supports the following definitions of hazing provided by the USOC's SafeSport Committee:

Definition of Hazing:

Hazing includes any conduct which is intimidating, humiliating, offensive, or physically harmful. The hazing conduct is typically an activity that serves as a condition for joining a group or being socially accepted by a group's members.

Activities that fit the definition of hazing are considered to be hazing regardless of a person's willingness to cooperate or participate.

Hazing does not include group or team activities that are meant to establish normative team behaviors, or promote team cohesion, so long as such activities do not have reasonable potential to cause emotional or physical distress to any participant.

Examples of Hazing

Hazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requiring or forcing (including through peer pressure) the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs• Tying, taping, or physically restraining a participant;• Sexual simulations or sexual acts of any nature• Sleep deprivation, or the withholding of water and/or food• Social actions or public displays (e.g. public nudity) that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule• Beating, paddling, or other forms of physical assault.
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WILLFULLY TOLERATING MISCONDUCT:

How to Recognize, Reduce and Respond to Willfully Tolerating Misconduct

It is a violation of this USA-WSWS policy if an instructor, coach, official, or any other member or affiliate of USA-WSWS knows of misconduct, but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the athlete(s), participant(s), staff member and/or volunteer.

Although these policies are designed to reduce child abuse and other misconduct, it can still occur. Staff, members, volunteers and participants of each member club and program shall follow the reporting procedures set forth in Section IV: Reporting Abuse and Misconduct. It is a clear violation of this policy if a club or program does not investigate suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse, or attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of such allegations, as a condition of reporting suspicions or allegations to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Violations of the USA-WSWS's policies shall be reported pursuant to the USA-WSWS reporting policy and will be addressed under the USA-WSWS disciplinary rules and procedure.

SECTION II: EDUCATION & AWARENESS TRAINING

Education is a key component of any abuse and misconduct prevention strategy. Awareness training provides relevant participants with information necessary to more effectively monitor their organization, minimize the opportunities for abuse and misconduct, and respond to concerns. It is also a strong public statement that the organization places a priority on the safety of its participants.

In an effort to maintain a safe environment for USA-WSWS members, it is a requirement that all USA-WSWS Certified Coaches and Instructors, all assigned international team staff, all NSSA Show Directors and Assistant Directors, all Junior Development coaches and leadership and all NGB staff complete the Center for SafeSport's education and certification program. It is also strongly encouraged that all USA-WSWS members familiarize themselves with the USA-WSWS SafeSport Program. The more awareness USA-WSWS members have about abuse and misconduct, the safer the sport will be.

To prevent child physical and sexual abuse and other types of abuse and misconduct, the awareness training shall:

- Provide definitions and effects of child physical and sexual abuse;
- Provide definitions and effects of all forms of abuse and misconduct (emotional, physical, and sexual; bullying, harassment, and hazing);
- Identify risk opportunities for physical and sexual abuse;
- Address common myths about offenders;
- Outline patterns, behaviors, and methods of operation of sexual predators;
- Identify risk opportunities for abuse and misconduct in sport;
- Identify policies, practices, and procedures to recognize, reduce, and report misconduct.

USA-WSWS has adopted the Center for Safe Sport's SafeSport training materials as the official education and certification program and as an available resource to its members. The Center's SafeSport training materials include a series of online training videos, free of charge to USA-WSWS members, in the following subjects that are available for the training of administrators, coaches, volunteers, board members, etc.:

- Emotional and Physical Misconduct
- Mandatory Reporting
- Sexual Misconduct and Awareness Education

The training videos in total are each approximately 30 minutes long and once completed will provide the member with SafeSport certification.

To find the link to register and complete the SafeSport video training, go to:

<https://safesport.org/authentication/register?token=6a8f3654-bd10-45c4-a2b4-927709856f56>

The training course is free of charge to USA-WSWS members.

Certain jurisdictions in the United States have mandatory training and testing that may apply to those that work or volunteer with youth athletes. If state-mandated training and testing are in place, then the training and testing shall be consistent with relevant standards of care and state legislation.

SECTION III: SCREENING

Applicant screening processes identify applicants with characteristics that would increase the risk of harm if they were placed in a particular position. The screening process is based on the requirements of the position, the nature of the contact with athletes and participants and the legal limits placed on the use of screening tools. Sound, practical and responsible screening practices reduce the chance that athlete and participants will come in contact with potentially dangerous adults.

Purposes of a Screening Policy:

1. Protect USA-WSWS participants from known offenders so that such known offenders cannot be in a position of influence and authority.
2. Deter offenders who have not been caught from joining USA-WSWS clubs and events because the organization has a known policy against abuse.
3. Protect USA-WSWS's reputation as a sport where participants are safe from abuse.
4. Help protect USA-WSWS member clubs, programs, events and all members from liability that could arise from allowing a previous offender to have access to minor participants.

USA-WSWS requires screening of the following members:

- All USA-WSWS Certified Instructors / Coaches
- Any team staff of National and International Teams
 - Including coaches, team leaders, managers, medical support and any other person in position of influence and authority
- Show Ski Team Show Directors and Assistant Directors
- Junior Development Coaches and Leadership
- Employees of USA-WSWS

Screening Policy

It is USA-WSWS's policy that prior to the hiring of staff, awarding certification of instructors or designating any member into a position of influence and authority, that each individual gives consent to and passes a formal applicant screening process before performing or participating in USA-WSWS events and activities.

Elements of the Criminal Background Screening process are as follows:

Minimum Requirements:

- Applicant must be a current USA-WSWS Active Member
(Does not include GrassRoots or Guest members)
- Applicant must be age 18 or above
- Applicant must have a valid Social Security number

This process includes the investigation and review of various consumer reports and law enforcement/public records including, but not limited to, the items listed below. Results are returned on an average of three (3) business days.

- Criminal History Check
- Sex Offender Check
- Social Security Number Check
- Address Checks
- Employment Checks
- Reference Checks

SECTION IV: REPORTING ABUSE AND MISCONDUCT

USA-WSWS strives to provide a safe environment for its members and to protect the opportunity of its members to participate in the sport in an atmosphere that is free of harassment and abusive practices. USA-WSWS will not tolerate or condone any form of harassment or abuse of or by any of its members including coaches, officials, directors, employees, parents, athletes, and volunteers, or any other persons, while they are participating in or preparing for a USA-WSWS sanctioned activity or event.

A reporting process clarifies to all participants, staff, volunteers, responsible parties and members of the public that the organization understands its duty and responsibility to create a safe and positive environment for athletes. This statement also further reinforces the organization's commitment to athlete safety.

An effective reporting process that results in reports of suspected abuse and misconduct, and does not in any way deter victims or witnesses from reporting abuse and misconduct, is a key element to preventing abuse and misconduct from occurring. Potential abusers will avoid involvement in a program where there is a likelihood that suspected abuse will be reported. When sport stakeholders are untrained about how and when to report suspected abuse, they may feel ill-prepared, powerless and lost when it comes to responding to and reporting misconduct. By providing this guidance on when and how to report suspected misconduct, USA-WSWS seeks to remove barriers to disclosing misconduct, including child physical and sexual abuse.

The following policy works in conjunction with the USA-WSWS's SafeSport Reporting Process and can be found in *USA-WSWS's Code of Ethics*:

Item 8: Enforcement

All USA-WSWS volunteers and employees are expected to use good judgment and abide by this Code of Ethics. Any violation may expose the volunteer or employee, and the USA-WSWS, to civil and criminal liability and may harm our reputation and, therefore, our ability to raise funds in support of our mission.

Anyone who violates the Code of Ethics is subject to disciplinary measures, which may include termination of employment, suspension, or expulsion from USA-WSWS. Disciplinary measure may also be taken with respect to senior staff who condone improper conduct by their associates or who do not take measure to correct problems that are brought to their attention. Violations of the Code of Ethics shall be brought to the attention of either the President of USA-WSWS, the Chairman of the Ethics Committee or the Executive Director of USA-WSWS. The Ethics Committee shall review all violations of the Code of Ethics and, if appropriate, recommend sanctions to the Executive Committee (as to volunteers) or the Executive Director (as to staff).

Each employee and volunteer has the obligation not only to abide by the Code of Ethics, but also to report violations of the Code of Ethics when they become aware of them. USA-WSWS will not tolerate any retaliation or threats of retaliation or threats of retaliation against anyone who, in good faith, reports a violation or suspected infringement.

This policy serves as a framework to guide ethical conduct, but by no means covers every situation. If you are unclear about the requirements of this policy, please consult your supervisor or contact the Chairman of the Ethics Committee. You have a responsibility to ask questions if you have doubts about a situation or proposed course of action.

The following people shall be required to deliver a biennial certification to the Executive Assistant of USA-WSWS regarding compliance with the Code of Ethics: (This can be satisfied by an e-mail statement.)

- 1. USA-WSWS and Sport Disciplines board of directors.*
- 2. Members of the Athletes Advisory Council.*
- 3. International Team Staff*
- 4. Employees of USA-WSWS*

REPORTING PROCESS

It is the expectation that all USA-WSWS members contribute to the effectiveness of USA-WSWS's SafeSport reporting process which mandates a report of any suspected abuse or misconduct. It is critical that all members understand that they should not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of child physical or sexual abuse allegations as a condition for reporting to USA-WSWS or to appropriate law enforcement officials.

Failure to Report:

It is the obligation of USA-WSWS members and member clubs to report suspicions or allegations of abuse or misconduct. If a person in authority knows, or should reasonably have known, that harassment or abuse may have occurred and fails to report it or take appropriate action as set out in this policy statement, that person may be subject to disciplinary action.

Retaliations or Threats of Reprisal

Retaliation or threats of reprisal against an individual for filing a complaint under this policy or for participating or assisting in any procedure under this policy will be considered harassment for the purpose of this policy. Further, any person who makes groundless allegations or complaints of abuse or harassment may be subject to disciplinary action.

Importance of Confidentially

Any investigation and/or disciplinary proceedings must be kept confidential. An investigator shall not discuss the investigation with anyone except for the purposes of conducting the investigation, except as requested by law enforcement or child protection authorities. Hearings should be closed and confidential, to the extent possible, other than for notification of the outcome. Participants in the hearing, including the hearing committee, complainant, victim, and witnesses (if any are permitted), should be requested and encouraged to keep the proceedings confidential, except as requested by law enforcement or child protection authorities. The hearing panel shall not discuss the testimony with anyone and shall deliberate among themselves until final resolution of the complaint, except as requested by law enforcement or child protection authorities.

Reporting Abuse and Misconduct

If you are aware of or suspect any violation of USA-WSWS's policies on abuse and misconduct, you should do all of the following:

1. Report the abuse to authorities.

If the abuse and misconduct is criminal in nature, contact the authorities immediately.

In most states, you are obligated to bring this matter to the attention of local law enforcement or public child welfare organization and make a report. In fact, not reporting incidents in some states is against the law and the coach or witness could be liable. Some states have a "Mandated Reporter Status." Be aware of your state laws and specific reporting requirements. If you do not know which authorities to contact in your state, call the National Domestic Violence / Abuse Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE | 1-800-799-7233 | 1-800-787-3224 TDD. All calls to the hotline are confidential, and callers may remain anonymous if they wish. You may also call Victims Assistance Ministry at (800) 355-2545 or seek help directly by contacting one of the Child Protective Services or one of the Law Enforcement Agencies in your area.

2. Report the abuse to USA-WSWS or to the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

Notify the USA-WSWS Executive Director or President, or contact the U.S. Center for SafeSport (www.safesport.org). All investigations and adjudications under this policy will be made by the U.S. Center for SafeSport (see Section V: Enforcement, below).

Association on an Appeal, Grievance, or Disciplinary Action involving a member shall apply to his/her membership in all of the Sports Disciplines of USA-WSWS.

3. Alert your club president, if appropriate.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Contact a Local Child Protection Agency

Mandated Reporters:

A key legal protection for children and youth across the United States is the requirement that, following special training in the identification and reporting of child abuse, people involved in certain occupations must report suspected child abuse to a local law enforcement agency or local public child welfare agency or both, depending on state law.

These mandatory reporter occupations include health practitioners, teachers, social workers, psychologists, clergy, firefighters, police officers, day camp administrators and youth organization and youth recreation program employees and coaches, among others, as prescribed by state law. Therefore, if mandated reporters observe abuse or suspect abuse of a young USA-WSWS member, they are required by law to report it immediately.

Mandated reporters may be USA-WSWS team physicians or sport psychologists. They are not required to disclose the fact that they made such a report to the parent or guardian, nor are they supposed to investigate the situation. They will obtain only enough information to report a "reasonable suspicion." The reporter's identity is confidential and will only be disclosed between cross-reporting child protection agencies.

Other Observers: If any form of child abuse is observed or suspected by a non-mandated reporter, that person should immediately telephone either local law enforcement or a public child welfare agency and make a report. (If more than one child protection agency exists, many states require that they cross-report.)

Some communities provide a child abuse hotline for this purpose. Even if observers are unsure as to whether or not an action, incident, or situation meets their state's legal definition of child abuse, they should report it. Child safety must be the most important consideration. To encourage this, the reporter's identity is always kept confidential. The local child protection agency is then responsible for assessing the matter and conducting any investigation. That agency is also responsible for informing the reporter as to what determination it made and what actions it took as a result of its evaluation. Observers should not attempt to handle the situation themselves or investigate the circumstances. Instead, they must report the matter to their local child protection agency.

SECTION V: ENFORCEMENT

The monitoring and supervision aspect of USA-WSWS's SafeSport Program describes how USA-WSWS member club and programs monitor, supervise and ensure that aspects of the SafeSport Program (i.e., implementation and enforcement of policies, training requirements, screening requirements, responding, reporting and adjudication procedures, etc.) are being followed, and how they may be improved, so that they result in a safe environment for all participants.

Member Clubs and Programs:

- It is required that clubs/programs monitor and enforce compliance of all USA-WSWS rules and implemented policies;
- It is recommended that clubs/programs verify that any person in position of influence and authority has completed the required screening **prior to** such persons having access to athletes and participants.
- It is required that clubs/programs promptly address any reports of abuse and misconduct, and make all such reports as are required under the USA-WSWS rules, SafeSport Program or applicable law;
- It is recommended that clubs/programs conduct reviews and evaluation of their program to monitor and promote compliance with the USA-WSWS SafeSport Program;
- It is recommended that each club designate a club member to hold the title of SafeSport Compliance officer. The specific duties of the SafeSport Compliance officer include monitoring the SafeSport policies and procedures of the club, verifying USA-WSWS Certified Instructor/Coach compliance and being the initial contact for persons reporting suspected abuse, misconduct or other violations and when appropriate reporting such information to USA-WSWS. If a SafeSport Compliance officer is not selected, the president of the club will assume the responsibilities of the SafeSport Compliance officer.
- USA-WSWS also recommends that each club have at least three persons within the club who have completed the SafeSport Program training course (online video). This course is completely free of charge.

It is every member's responsibility to promptly report any incident regarding sexual misconduct by a member as described in the Reporting Section of USA-WSWS SafeSport handbook. Reporting must occur when an individual has firsthand knowledge of misconduct or where specific and credible information has been received from a victim of knowledgeable third party. Various state laws may also require reporting to law enforcement or to a designated child protection agency.

Complaints, Investigations and Adjudications:

All complaints or requests for investigations under USA-WSWS's SafeSport policy will be referred to the U.S. Center for SafeSport, which shall have the sole and exclusive authority and jurisdiction to investigate, conduct hearings, make preliminary rulings and issue final orders on complaints and requests for investigations under USA-WSWS's Safesport Policy. The final decision of the U.S. Center for SafeSport shall be reported to the President of USA-WSWS, and shall be binding upon and implemented by USA-WSWS.

SECTION VI: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

Education:

- Center for SafeSport Training Program -- <http://safesport.org/>
- USA-WSWS Safe Sport Brochure:
<http://www.usawaterski.org/graphics/downloads/USAWSSafeSportBrochure.pdf>